

Valley Scheduling Saves Grower Time and Irrigation Costs



LOCATION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — G2 Farming — Near Hermiston, Oregon
SITUATION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Farm co-owned and operated by Greg Juul and Troy Betz — Irrigate up to 6,000 acres a year, depending on rotation — Some acres owned, some leased — Mostly potatoes, also onions, alfalfa, grass seed, green peas, seed corn, sweet corn — High desert – annual rainfall of only 4-6 inches
CHALLENGE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Time management — Efficient water application
DEPLOYMENT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Valley Scheduling™
EFFECT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Significant time savings, leading to increased productivity — Improved irrigation decisions — Greater water efficiency



Greg Juul

Greg Juul and his business partner, Troy Betz, own and operate G2 Farming near Hermiston, Oregon. He says technology has given them a competitive advantage. “When Troy and I took over the farm, we switched from a competitor’s brand to Valley,” he said. “We’ve definitely adopted a lot of tech that’s come into farming.”

They began remotely managing their pivots and pumps in 2002, and now use them to irrigate up to 6,000 acres a year, depending on rotation. Their core business is irrigated potatoes, cultivating them on around half of their acres each year. “We rotate with fresh onions, alfalfa and grass seed as our primary crops,” Juul said, “and then we do some minor crops, such as seed corn and small vegetable crops like green peas and sweet corn.”

Those are sensitive crops, and their farm is located in an arid area of the state. “It’s high desert,” Juul explains. “Typically, the weather is dry and hot. It’s cold in the winter, and mild in the spring, but windy. Annual rainfall is 4-6 inches, so irrigation is a must in northeast Oregon.”

All of these factors made G2 Farming a natural to implement Valley Scheduling.



Better Irrigation Decisions Based on Better Data

Valley Scheduling is an advanced management tool that helps growers make informed irrigation decisions based on data about soil, crop type, the crop's stage of development and weather conditions. These inputs are analyzed, and Valley Scheduling delivers precise yet easy to understand recommendations to the grower's mobile device or computer.

"We are currently utilizing Valley Scheduling on our high-value crops – potatoes and onions," Juul said. "Those are the most sensitive to irrigation and the most critical in terms of irrigation timing."

Juul describes Valley Scheduling this way: "It's an automated version of what we've been doing manually for years: we've been going out field to field, digging with a shovel, squeezing the dirt, seeing how much moisture is in there, knowing whether it's trending to dry or trending to wet. What Valley Scheduling does is give you an intelligent electronic version of that measurement using sensors in the fields, and translates that data into usable information without having to go to the field or calculate it ourselves."

Valley Scheduling gives growers all of this information at the touch of a finger to help make good irrigation decisions each 24-hour period. "Valley Scheduling is another tool – almost another set of eyes in the field – as to where your soil moisture is at, especially with critical crops," Juul said. "It even helps us forecast fertilizer and chemical applications, and it's been extremely good for us."

Point and Click Precision

Like most people, Juul says time is probably the most valuable resource he has, and certainly one of the most limited, but technology like Valley Scheduling has allowed him to do more with the amount of time available.

Before Valley Scheduling and other smart irrigation solutions from Valley, Juul says it would take two or three people to make irrigation changes. "We'd probably spend 3-4 hours a day just turning pivots and pumps on and off. The tools from Valley have allowed us to make decisions and implement changes in minutes, where in years past we had to go to each field. Today I can change it at the pivot point, I can change it remotely at my home, or I can change it with my phone anywhere in the world," he said.

"It's all at your fingertips, really. You can't ask for much more than that."

Trending in the Right Direction

Efficiency is the goal for G2 Farming. "When I came to the farm, we were farming about 2,000 to 2,500 acres and irrigating with three or four people. We're now irrigating 5,000 to 6,000 acres a year and irrigating with one person," Juul said. "Technology has made us very time efficient, and has made us very competitive in the management of irrigation costs."

Valley Scheduling is the latest technological innovation that Juul has embraced to make their operation more productive. "It's a time savings tool that allows me to see the entire farm at any given time. You can see all of your history at a click. It's information that you can use to make good irrigation management decisions on a daily basis."

His advice for other growers is simple. "Don't be afraid to embrace technology like Valley Scheduling. There are a lot of proven products out there. They make you more efficient. They work right to your bottom line, and that's what keeps us competitive in the industries that we're in."